

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00006 052057Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15

PRS-01 SP-02 CG-00 DOTE-00 PM-04 OFA-01 /043 W

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R 052000Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1258

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USCINCSO PANAMA

COMMANDANT, USCOAST GUARD WASHDC

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 0006

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: MASS EWWT EAIR HA

SUBJ: IMPROVED PERFORMANCE OF HAITIAN ARMED FORCES IN RESCUE
OPERATIONS OFF HAITIAN COAST

1. DURING THE MONTH OF DEC 1975, THE U.S. DEFENSE ATTACHE IN HAITI HAS OBSERVED A NOTICEABLY INCREASED READINESS ON THE PART OF THE HAITIAN NAVY AND AIR FORCE TO ENGAGE IN SEA AND AIR SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS IN HAITIAN WATERS. ALTHOUGH THE RECENTLY APPROVED MAP TRAINING PROGRAM FOCUSED ON THIS SPECIFIC CAPABILITY IS JUST GETTING OFF THE GROUND, IT MAY HAVE ALREADY ENGENDERED A GREATER RESPONSIVENESS TO MARINERS IN DISTRESS AND A HIGHER SENSE OF PROFESSIONALISM IN THE HAITIAN UNITS SCHEDULED TO BENEFIT FROM THIS TRAINING.

2. ON DEC 8, A HAITIAN NAVY PATROL CRAFT TOOK UNDER TOW THE HAITIAN MOTOR BOAT "SANTA MARIA", DISABLED IN THE GULF OF GONAVE WITH 60 PASSENGERS AND A HEAVY LOAD OF FREIGHT. IN CONTRAST WITH PREVIOUS PRACTICE, THE COMMANDANT OF THE HAITIAN NAVY GAVE PUBLICITY TO THIS HUMANITARIAN MISSION, AND IT WAS REPORTED IN THE HAITIAN PRESS.

3. ON DEC 22, THE U.S. COAST GUARD IN SAN JUAN REQUESTED CLEARANCE TO SEARCH HAITI'S NORTHERN COASTLINE FOR THE OVERDUE TUG "BOUNDLESS". INSTEAD OF SIMPLY GRANTING CLEARANCE

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PAGE 02 PORT A 00006 052057Z

(AS HAS BEEN NORMAL), THE COMMANDANT OF THE HAITIAN AIR FORCE

OFFERED TO SEND A HAITIAN AIRCRAFT TO PERFORM THE SEARCH, ADDING THAT CLEARANCE WAS GRANTED FOR THE U.S. COAST GUARD AIRCRAFT TO LAND AND REFUEL IN PORT AU PRINCE IF REQUIRED. THOUGH RESULTS WERE NEGATIVE, THE HAITIAN AIR FORCE DULY PERFORMED THE REQUESTED PATROL MISSION AND REPORTED THE RESULTS PROMPTLY.

4. ON DEC 28, THE U.S. COAST GUARD IN MIAMI NOTIFIED THE HAITIAN ARMED FORCES, THROUGH DATT, THAT A U.S. REGISTERED MOTOR SAILER, THE "FELU" (HP 3374), WAS DISABLED AT THE SE TIP OF GONAVE ISLAND. INSTEAD OF GIVING PERMISSION TO THE US COAST GUARD TO ENTER HAITIAN WATERS AND RESCUE THE VESSEL (AS HAS BEEN THE PREVAILING PATTERN), THE COMMANDANT OF THE HAITIAN NAVY SENT OUT A VESSEL WHICH TOOK THE FELU IN TOW WITHIN 3 HOURS, AFTER DARK, AND BROUGHT IT PROMPTLY AND SAFELY INTO PORT AU PRINCE LONG BEFORE DAYLIGHT. THE AMERICAN CAPTAIN WAS FULL OF PRAISE FOR THE WAY THE HAITIANS HANDLED THIS CASE. THIS WAS THE FIRST INSTANCE IN RECENT YEARS WHEN THE HAITIAN NAVY TOOK CHARGE OF A SEARCH AND RESCUE CASE COMPLETELY ON ITS OWN UPON NOTIFICATION BY THE US COAST GUARD.

5. AS THE MAP TRAINING PROGRAM PROCEEDS, IT MAY BE EXPECTED THAT THIS KIND OF PERFORMANCE BY THE HAITIAN NAVY AND AIR FORCE WILL BECOME ROUTINE, AND THAT U.S. INTERESTS WILL BE SERVED AS THEY WERE IN THE LAST TWO CASES NOTED ABOVE.

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